UNDP

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Distributed on request
DP/PROJECTS/7108

ENGLISH

APPROVAL OF UNDP ASSISTANCE TO A PROJECT OF OMAN

IPF:(1987-91) $1 890 000

(OMA/88/006) - Date Palm Improvement (Supplementary Assistance)

Date of approval:	1 July 1990
Expected duration:	32 months
Proposed executing agency:	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Government implementing agency:	Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Proposed UNDP contribution:	$379 900 Source of funds: IPF
Previous UNDP budget:	$207 200
Total UNDP budget:	$587 100 (cost sharing)

Project background

Dates are one of the main traditional agricultural crops grown in the Sultanate of Oman and considered the main source of diet and income in rural areas. However, date palm production in Oman faces many constraints, the most serious of which is low productivity with an average yield of not more than 20 kilograms per tree. While there are no official figures on the annual production of dates, the total annual production is estimated to range from 75,000 to 100,000 tons, of which 51,000 tons are utilized for local consumption and 4,000 tons exported, with the remaining traded by private middlemen and farmers.

The expansion of the oil industry has caused a degradation of the date palm plantations in general. The oil industry created tremendous employment opportunities and improvements in living standards which inevitably led to heavy migration flows to urban areas. This resulted in acute shortages of skilled labour and the rapid deterioration of date palm orchards. Despite the substantial investments made so far, agriculture contributes only 12 percent of the GDP; and consequently, Oman relies heavily on imports to satisfy its food requirements.

Description of project

The immediate objectives of the project are to: (a) intensify date palm production; (b) improve existing methods for better management of pests and disease control; (c) develop the utilization capacity of the two date packing plants; and (d) upgrade and develop technical staff capabilities in date palm improvement programmes through appropriate training.

Inputs

UNDP will provide one date processing/industrial team leader (32 work-months), one date palm production expert (12 work-months), one date protection expert (12 work-months); administrative support personnel; two UN Volunteers (food technology and horticulture date palm for 12 work-months each); one fellowship for 12 months to obtain Masters degree in food technology with emphasis on date processing and industrialization, one two work-months study tour in date palm horticulture practices, one two work-months training in packaging, processing and industrialization of dates, in-country training and on-the-job training; and miscellaneous costs.

Financial data

	$
Personnel	322 300
Training	47 600
Miscellaneous	10 000
Total	379 900

- - - - -